



*Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
Mayor*

## COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

*Tom Liebel, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Chris Ryer  
Director*

**May 14, 2019**

**REQUEST:** Final Review – Construct Ten New Three-Story Rowhouses

**ADDRESS:** 1216-1226 Hollins Street and 14-20 S. Stockton Street (Union Square Historic District)

**PETITIONER(S):** Jim Mills, BWI RE Properties

**STAFF:** Walter W. Gallas, AICP

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of plans with conditions.

### **SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Union Square Historic District: The Union Square local historic district is a dense area of rowhouses and commercial structures located in Southwest Baltimore. Two major features define the district: Union Square Park, a donation to the city in the 1840s, and Hollins Market with the city's oldest market building. Generally bounded by South Schroeder Street, West Pratt Street, South Fulton Avenue, and West Baltimore Street, the area of approximately 21 blocks is comprised of over 1,000 buildings. The district is built on a hierarchical street-grid system laid down over gently sloping terrain by engineer-surveyor Thomas H. Poppleton following the land's 1816 annexation to the city (*Image 1*).

#### Site Conditions – 1216-1226 Hollins Street

The existing property is vacant land due to demolitions on the north side of Hollins Street between S. Stockton Street to the east and S. Carey Street to the west (*Images 2 & 4*).

#### Site Conditions – 14-20 S. Stockton Street

This vacant property abuts the Hollins Street property along the west side of S. Stockton Street between W. Baltimore Street to the north and Hollins Street to the south. The site is bounded on the north by The Greater Church of Jesus Christ (*Images 2 & 4*).

### **BACKGROUND**

May 12, 1978 – Demolition of six rowhouses making up the lots subdivided to create today's 14-20 S. Stockton Street was approved by the Commission.

January 18, 19080 – Commission approved landscaping and fencing for the Stockton Street parking lot, owned at the time by Maryland National Bank.

November 14, 2017 – Commission determined that due to fire and deterioration, 1214, 1216, 1218, 1220 and 1226 Hollins Street had lost substantial architectural fabric and significance and were no longer contributing buildings. The buildings were demolished beginning in early 2018, after another fire.

February 12, 2019 – Commission gave concept approval of height, scale, and massing for plans to construct ten new rowhouses on the Hollins and Stockton lots, with the plans to return to the Commission for final approval of design details. The architect was to develop more fully:

- The design of the Hollins Street elevations, specifically studying the square windows and the balconies at the second floors, articulating the roof cornice more fully, looking at the finishes for the end unit elevations (stucco versus Hardie panel), and proposing colors for masonry and Hardie panels.
  - The design of the S. Stockton Street elevations, specifically the depth of the recessed entries, as well as the roof cornice, end units finishes and colors of materials.
- In addition, the Commission added guidance to explore different façade treatment consistent with the historic fabric in the surrounding neighborhood.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to construct six new three-story rowhouses on the lots at 1216-1226 Hollins Street, and four new three-story rowhouses on the lots at 14-20 S. Stockton Street (*Images 3 & 5*). See accompanying plans attached separately.

## **APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES**

- *2.1 Guiding Principles for New Construction:* The new construction, in accordance with the guidelines, is replacing buildings which were approved for demolition by the Commission. The buildings which stood on Hollins Street had substantially lost their architectural fabric and significance, and their demolition was approved in 2017. The buildings on S. Stockton Street were approved for demolition by the Commission in 1978 to make way for a parking lot. The design of the replacement structures is contemporary while taking into account the scale and massing of the surrounding historic district, which is consistent with the guidelines.
- *2.2 Site Design:* The plans meet this design guideline, placing the houses on Hollins Street at the front property line as is the pattern in the neighborhood. On Stockton Street, responding to the Commission's recommendation, the recessed entry is reduced to 18 inches. The houses are moved back 4 feet from the front lot line, and the two front steps are not in the public right-of-way of the narrow street for fire marshal reasons.
- *2.3 Scale and Form:* The height and depth of the buildings are compatible with the height and depth of many other buildings in the neighborhood. Four of the new houses on Hollins Street will be on lots that are 17.25 feet wide, replacing five lots that were 13 to 15 feet wide. The proposed new rowhouses are 33'-5/8" in height with flat roofs. The heights of the rowhouses across Hollins Street to the south of the proposed construction are comparable, measuring from about 29'-0" to 32'-0" based on aerial views. The four proposed three-story Stockton Street rowhouses will each be on 16-foot wide lots replacing the six demolished rowhouses that were on lots only 11 feet

wide. The front elevation design of the four houses retains a simple window and door pattern.

- *2.4.1 Building Entrances:* The front entrances of the proposed Hollins Street rowhouses with stoops are effective traditional connectors to the street and meet the design guidelines. The entrances to the S. Stockton Street rowhouses will have two steps to the first floor and a recessed entry of 18 inches. This is a change for the Stockton Street designs, which originally had a more recessed entry. The change responds to a Commission recommendation.
- *2.4.3. Garages:* Four of the proposed Hollins Street rowhouses will have garages at the rear of the first floor, accessed by a private drive off S. Stockton Street. Located as they are at the rear, the garages meet the design guidelines.
- *2.4.5 Roofs:* The proposed roofs are flat, which are compatible with the designs of most surrounding buildings. The Commission requested more articulation of the roof cornice, which in the initial designs showed no roof cornice detail. The newest renderings show a bit more detail: two courses of corbelled brick at the roof and a single band of projecting masonry slightly below. The plans meet the design guidelines.
- *2.5.1 Doors and Windows:* The front doors are painted two-panel doors. The proposed windows are one-over-one windows throughout for the most part. The front windows are to be wood; the windows at the sides and rear are to be vinyl. Staff recommends that the windows of the end units not be vinyl given their visibility. The initial designs for the Hollins Street rowhouses showed a square window at the second floor front elevation where a half-bath is located in a corner of the dining room. The square window breaks up the otherwise regular rhythm of windows at the front. Doors at the second floors of four units lead to shallow steel balconies with wood-topped railings suspended over the sidewalk and supported by metal hangers. The Commission recommended study of the square windows and the balconies. The applicant made no changes in the latest plans. Staff recommends that the balconies be cantilevered and the hangers eliminated for a cleaner look.
- *2.5.2 Materials:* The applicant has submitted materials. A two-color brick veneer is proposed on the facades. Glen Gery Cobbs Creek modular, a gray masonry, frames the windows at the third floor on three sides. The gray masonry is also proposed at the third floor in the vertical masonry bands at the end units. Glen Gery Camden modular, a red color brick veneer, flanks the first and second floor windows and runs along the base beneath a band of cast stone, giving the appearance of a water table. The red brick is also proposed in the vertical bands at the end units at the first and second floor. Staff recommends the use of a single color of masonry. At the end units, the choice of colors—graphite and black—and the placement on the Hardie Board panels appears random. Staff recommends regularizing this pattern.

## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Union Square ARC and Hollins Roundhouse Neighborhood have received copies of the plans and have expressed no formal objections.

## ANALYSIS

The plans and designs for these new buildings in the Union Square historic district go a long way in meeting CHAP guidelines and could provide compatible, contemporary new residences in the neighborhood. The key is in the design details. CHAP staff finds that the proposed plans:

- Meet 2.1 *Guiding Principles for New Construction*;
- Meet 2.2 *Site Design*;
- Meet 2.3 *Scale and Form*;
- Meet 2.4.1 *Building Entrances*;
- Meet 2.4.3 *Garages*;
- Meet 2.4.5 *Roofs*;
- Partially meet 2.5.1 *Doors and Windows*;
- Partially meet 2.5.2 *Materials*.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of the designs with the following conditions:

- Use one color of masonry
- Regularize the treatment of the panels and colors at the end units
- Add balconies to 1224 and 1226 Hollins Street
- Cantilever the balconies, eliminating the metal hangers
- Use material other than vinyl for end unit windows
- Ensure that plan views and elevations are consistent, especially in case of Stockton Street rowhouse steps



**Eric Holcomb**  
**Director**

## MAP AND IMAGES



*Image 1: 1216-1226 Hollins Street and 14-20 S. Stockton Street in the Union Square Historic District*



*Image 2: Proposed site at northwest corner of Hollins Street and S. Stockton Street, February 8, 2019*



*Image 3: Rendering – Northwest corner of Hollins Street and S. Stockton Street*



*Image 4: Hollins Street looking east, February 8, 2019*



*Image 5: Rendering – Hollins Street looking east*